Ms. Johnson: Customers can try to negotiate better terms, but if they don't have time, that is one of the duties of the Software Product Managers — to negotiate for them. The SPM would go out to all our vendors on the contract with the requirements or specific product and ask for their best price.

Mr. Groce: The customer should contact the SPM whenever they have questions concerning an Enterprise Agreement or when they have completed the requirements determination process and have selected a product. The SPM is usually in the best position to advise the customer. Using the ESI Web site communication tool is encouraged, and the SPM is required to respond in three business days. By the way, if our customers find better deals, we have a feedback process built into the regulations and policy. If possible, we want an opportunity to extend these prices to all DoD customers. This is because we take an enterprise view under ESI, and believe that the best discounts can be realized by consolidating our requirements and presenting a single face to industry. Defense customers should be aware of the procedural guidance in the Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement (DFARS) Subpart 208.74. A copy is available on the ESI Web site at www.don-imit.navy.mil/esi.

CHIPS: So you wouldn't just go to the vendor who didn't meet the contract price, you would canvass all the vendors on the contract?

Ms. Johnson: Right. We would open up the competition among vendors. We don't have very many "sole-source" vehicles.

Mr. Groce: Once a DoD customer determines their requirement, the customer must follow the DFARS guidance. All agreements are constructed for flexibility and the customer has many options when using them. Additional discounts may be obtained through "spot" price reductions and other methods. In many cases, we also try to maintain competition, so the same software products may be available from multiple resellers.

CHIPS: Let's talk about the features of the ITEC-Direct Web site.

Ms. Johnson: ITEC Direct is part of the DON acquisition strategy. The ITEC Direct Information System is the Navy's gateway to the IT Corridor for e-commerce. People can implement their own vision or version of e-commerce in one central marketplace. So we are hoping that all these initiatives lead to one of the main initiatives under MID-905 and the ESI — and that is Software Asset Management — managing software as we have traditionally managed hardware, treating software as an asset because it is an investment.

We find that people are buying licenses for the same product multiple times because licenses are not managed. In vehicles under the ESI we are making SAM a requirement so we can transfer licenses within the DON enterprise. So that if someone purchases a license that he no longer needs, we can find a use for that product within the enterprise. We have been successful so far in doing that with Oracle database licenses. We had people purchase licenses at a better than 64 percent discount and they were not going to use this product any longer. We have been successful in finding another home for those licenses. The agency that needed the Oracle database didn't have to purchase licenses — they could just pick up the maintenance costs. So that is saving a lot of money. We hope this doesn't happen too often, but if it does we have a method to transfer DON assets to where they are needed.

Mr. Groce: ITEC-Direct will continue as an e-commerce tool supporting both the IT Umbrella Program and the ESI. In addition, because the DoD ESI primarily uses Blanket Purchase Agreements (BPAs) under the GSA Schedules for establishing Enterprise Software Agreements, the ESI has reached agreement with GSA for creation of an additional storefront for our Enterprise Software Agreements called the Virtual IT Marketplace, or VITM. This "catalog within a catalog" uses the GSA Advantage infrastructure to provide "point and click" comparison shopping. The VITM will provide access to ESI products and services and will have the same capabilities as GSA Advantage. The VITM is now operational and may be accessed through the GSA Advantage Web site or directly at www.vitm.gov.

Adobe Contract Announcement

The Enterprise Software Initiative (ESI) is pleased to announce the award of a new Enterprise Software Agreement (ESA) for Adobe products. A Blanket Purchasing Agreement (BPA) was awarded to ASAP Software on September, 12, 2003, under BPA N00104-03-A-ZE88. Based on Department of Defense purchases on the previous BPA, the DoD community has qualified for discounts up to 13 percent off Adobe's highest GSA discount level (Level F).

The ASAP point of contact for this vehicle is David Beale. The Software Product Manager is Linda Greenwade. Ordering for this BPA expires September 30, 2005. Additional awards for Adobe vehicles are expected in the near future. Please go to the DON IT Umbrella Web site (www.it-umbrella.navy.mil) or the ITEC Direct Web site (www.itec-direct.navy.mil) for more information.

Thanks, I needed that!

The DON IT Umbrella Program proudly announces the completion of phase 1 of the newly unveiled Umbrella Program Web site — www.it-umbrella.navy.mil. Doris Bohenek, Umbrella Program technical specialist and Tony Virata, Umbrella Program Webmaster, have just completed phase 1 (a major structural and design change) of a multiphase project, which focuses on providing:

♦ A more intuitive Look-and-Feel Web site that is easy-to-use and navigate
♦ New Categories — FAQs, News Archives and more...
♦ News Bulletins
♦ Up-to-the-minute contract information

In phase 2, they plan to begin stuffing the pull-down menus chock-full of news you can use to make informed and cost-saving IT purchases, adding In-depth Product Reviews from IT technical experts, search capability across multiple contracts and a customizable layout tailored to a user's preference.

Visit today and let us know what you think — www.it-umbrella.navy.mil. We think you'll like our new look and features and agree, *"Thanks, I needed that!"*